



Antigua, Guatemala

La Antigua Guatemala is a city in the central highlands of Guatemala, which has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Although it is the smallest department of the country (465 km²), it is one of the most important ones because of its tourism and historical value. Antigua is located 45 km from Guatemala City.

Important Ruins and Other Tourist Attractions

- Church and Convent of Capuchins
- Cathedral of San José
- Ruins of old San José
- Church School of Christ
- Church of San Francisco
- Museum of Colonial Art, in the former San Carlos University Building
- The Jade Museum

Population

The city had a peak population of some 60,000 in the 1770s; the bulk of the population moved away in the late 18th century. According to the 2018 census, the city has approximately 46,054 inhabitants.

History

La Antigua Guatemala means the "Old Guatemala" and was the third capital of Guatemala. On March 10, 1543 the Spanish conquistadors founded present-day Antigua, and it was named Santiago de Los Caballeros (The Gentlemen of Santiago). For more than 200 years it served as the seat of the military governor of the Spanish colony of Guatemala, a large region that included almost all of present-day Central America and the southernmost State of Mexico, Chiapas. In 1566, King Felipe II of Spain gave it the title of "Muy Noble y Muy Leal" ("Very Noble and Very Loyal").

In 1773, a series of earthquakes destroyed much of the town, which led to the third change in location for the capital. The Spanish Crown ordered (1776) the removal of the capital to a safer location, the Valley of the Shrine, where Guatemala City, the modern capital of Guatemala, now stands. The badly damaged city of Santiago de Los Caballeros was ordered abandoned, although not everyone left, and was referred to as La Antigua Guatemala, or Old Guatemala.



Cathedral of San José

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**HUG IT
FORWARD** Bottle
Schools



President

Bernardo Arevalo de Leon
(2024)

Land Area

41,865 sq mi (108,430 sq km);
total area: 42,042 sq mi
(108,890 sq km)

Population (2021 est.)

17,109,746 (growth rate:
1.5%); birth rate: 27.4/1000;
infant mortality rate:
26.9/1000; life expectancy:
70.6; density per sq km: 119

Monetary Unit

Quetzal (US\$1 = approximately
7.7 Quetzales)

Guatemala

Guatemala is a country in Central America bordered by Mexico to the north and west, the Pacific Ocean to the southwest, Belize to the northeast, the Caribbean to the east, and Honduras and El Salvador to the southeast. Its area is 108,890 km² (42,043 mi²) with an estimated population of 13,276,517.

Guatemala is the most populous of the Central American countries, with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of roughly one-half that of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. The agricultural sector accounts for about one-fourth of GDP, two-fifths of exports, and half of the labor force. Coffee, sugar, and bananas are the main products, with sugar exports benefiting from increased global demand for ethanol.

Guatemala is divided into 22 departments (departamentos) and subdivided into about 334 municipalities (municipios). According to official figures, over 80% of Guatemalans are indigenous Mayans and Meztizos – a larger proportion of indigenous people than any other country in Latin America. Many rural people continue to speak a Mayan language and in addition to Spanish, 21 Mayan languages are officially recognized. Traditional Mayan spirituality is widely followed.

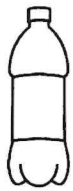
The 1996 signing of peace accords, ended 36 years of civil war, removed a major obstacle to foreign investment. Since then, Guatemala has pursued reforms and macroeconomic stabilization. On July 1, 2006, with the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) between and the US, Guatemala has since spurred increased investment in the export sector. The distribution of income remains highly unequal, however, with about 60% of the population living below the poverty line. Other ongoing challenges include increasing government revenues, negotiating further assistance from international donors, upgrading both government and private financial operations, and narrowing the trade deficit. Given Guatemala's large expatriate community in the United States often sends needed funds back to family, making Guatemala the top remittance recipient in Central America. This inflow serves as a primary source of foreign income equivalent to nearly two-thirds of exports.

Guatemala's location between the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean make it a target for hurricanes, having suffered great damage from 1998, and Hurricane Stan in 2005. The most recent severe storm was Tropical Storm Agatha in May 2010.

Guatemala's highlands lie along the Motagua Fault, part of the boundary between the Caribbean and North American tectonic plates. This fault has been responsible for several major earthquakes in historic times, including a 7.5 magnitude tremor on February 4, 1976, which killed more than 25,000 people. Guatemala has 37 volcanoes, four of which are active: Pacaya, Santiaguito, Fuego and Tacaná. Pacaya erupted in 2010 and Fuego erupted in 2018.

Natural disasters have a long history in this geologically active part of the world. For example, two of the three moves of the capital of Guatemala have been due to volcanic flows in 1541 and earthquakes in 1773.

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HUG IT Bottle Schools FORWARD

Why Build Bottle Schools?

Bottle School projects have many benefits, including:

- Providing much needed educational infrastructure for poorer communities
- Cleaning the streets of non-biodegradable trash
- Teaching environmental awareness, recycling and proper trash management
- Fostering community leadership
- Teaching new skills that can be used to gain employment or on other community projects
- Spending capital within the local community where the

school is being built

- Giving kids ownership of the school, because they build it with their own hands
- Uniting communities, they come together as one during the project

Project Description

Hug It Forward works to support and empower communities in Guatemala to build **Bottle Schools**: schools built using plastic soda bottles stuffed with inorganic trash. Entire communities come together to make the dream of educational opportunity a reality, by upcycling “waste” to build their own bottle school.

This school infrastructure project will be accomplished thanks to funds provided by Hug It Forward’s donors, and with the collaboration of the community members. The municipality and the PTA work jointly with students’ families in order to provide the manual labor required for the construction, as well as general coordination required for project implementation. Building a three-classroom bottle school requires over 10,000 bottles – children in the community are responsible for collecting the majority of these and stuffing them with trash to make “eco-bricks”. This gives them pride and a true sense of ownership in the school.

The school will be built in San Jose de Xepatan, located in the municipality of Patzún, Chimaltenango. Xepatan means “Under the strong tree”. People in Xepatan grow their own, cabbage, broccoli, carrots, onions, and a lot of different kind of vegetables and fruits, especially snow peas, corn and beans. This project will benefit 336 students, 15 teaching staff members and 600 families in the area. Around 4,000 habitants.

The members of the community of Xepatan mainly is Kaqchikel, it’s a 95% indigenous community and 95% of them speak their mother tongue, Kaqchikel, 80% of the community is catholic.

The kids help their parents after school on the work around the house such as: coffee picking, planting flowers, making tortillas, weaving beautiful textiles, and so on.

How to Build a Bottle School

Instead of the common cinder-block walls used in Central America, “eco-bricks” are stacked in between chicken wire, and covered in cement. The bottles are used solely as insulation; the strength of the buildings comes from the professionally built, structurally sound frame (columns and beams) made from concrete reinforced with rebar. This method of construction is both eco-friendly, economical and participatory, and independent structural analysis has testified to the strength and safety of the buildings.

Bottles

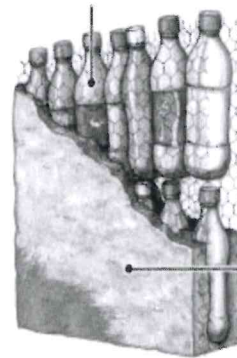
Community members (especially children) stuff the plastic bottles with plastic bags and other inorganic trash. More plastic bags fill in the gaps between the bottles.

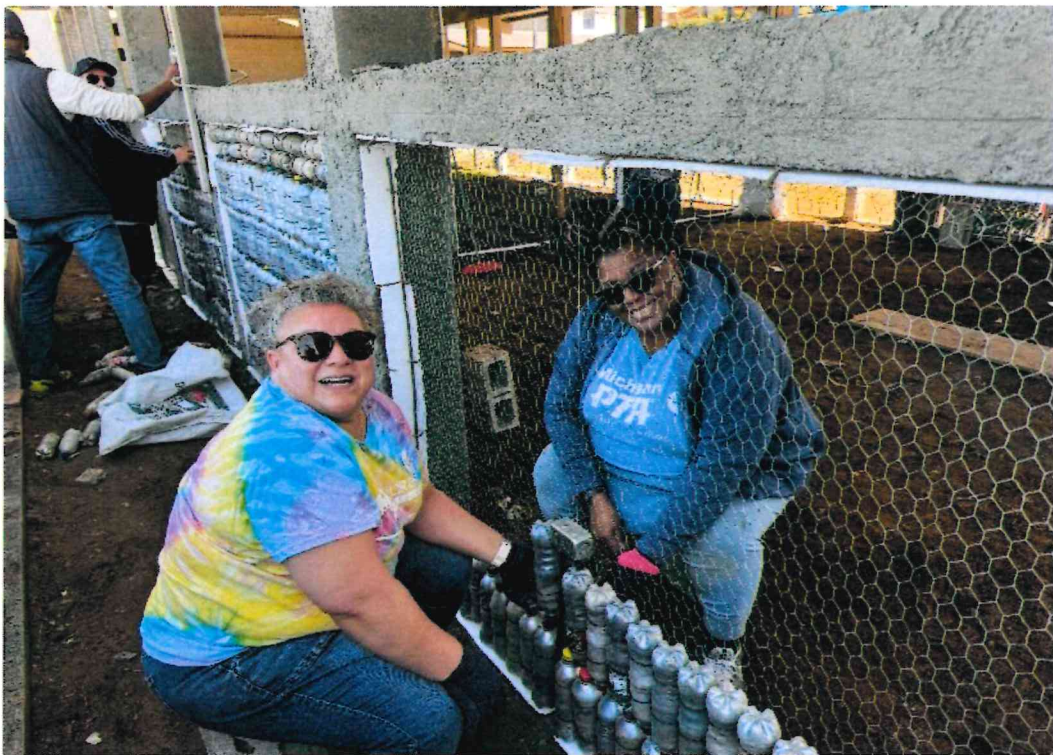
Chicken Wire

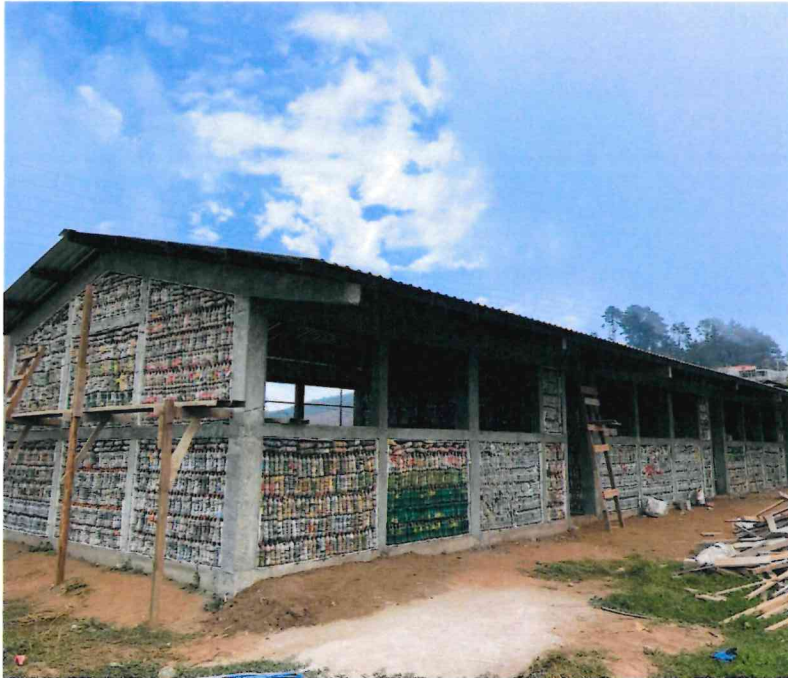
The bottles are bound between layers of chicken wire, which are attached to a frame made of concrete reinforced with rebar.

Cement

Three layers of cement are applied to the outside of the bottles, with paint adding the finishing touch.







After (10,000 bottle to complete)



Before

